KING IN BLACK

VENOM

CATES
COELLO
ABURTOV

MARVEL

31

LGY#196

-COELLO-
20

DURING ONE OF THE LOWEST POINTS OF HIS LIFE, DISGRACED REPORTER EDDIE BROCK STUMBLED UPON AN ALIEN ORGANISM CALLED A SYMBIOTE.

SENSING A KINSHIP WITH BROCK AND A SHARED HATRED OF THE COSTUMED VIGILANTE CALLED SPIDER-MAN, THE CREATURE BONDED TO HIM.

SEVERED FROM ITS OWN COLLECTED CONSCIOUSNESS, THE SYMBIOTE FOUND A WILLING PARTNER IN BROCK, AND THE TWO BECAME A VIGILANTE IN THEIR OWN RIGHT.

ELIMINATING THE CRIMINAL ELEMENT WITH EXTREME PREJUDICE, THEY ARE...

VENOM

THIRTY-TWO SECONDS

NOW KNULL—THE SYMBIOTES' PROGENITOR AND DEITY—HAS COME TO EARTH, STRIPPED BROCK OF THE SYMBIOTE AND UNLEASHED AN ARMY OF HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF SYMBIOTE DRAGONS ON AN UNPREPARED PLANET...

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A LONG TIME AGO...

USERNAME:
REX STRICKLAND
PASSWORD:
****

REX STRICKLAND'S WAREHOUSE.

BEGIN RECORDING.

THIS IS REX STRICKLAND, AND IF YOU'RE HEARING THIS, I'M DEAD.

WHICH, WELL, HONESTLY...

...MEANS **NO ONE** WILL EVER HEAR THIS.

BECAUSE THE ONLY MAN WHO WOULD EVER LISTEN...

...IS LIKELY DEAD TOO.

"EDDIE BROCK.

"VENOM.

"FEW HOURS AGO I SENT HIM ON A MISSION TO SAVE SOME OF MY OLD FRIENDS...*

*SEE VENOM #1, TRUE BELIEVERS! --DEVIN

"HE WASN'T THE VENOM I WANTED FOR THE JOB, BUT, WELL, HE'S ALL WE GOT NOW...

"FLASH THOMPSON--NOW THERE WAS A VENOM WITH SOME TRAINING. SOME STRATEGY AND KNOW-HOW.

"THIS BROCK GUY, THOUGH...

"HE STRIKES ME AS SOMEONE WHO TENDS TO FALL HEADLONG INTO HIS PROBLEMS..."

AND IF WE'RE GONNA SURVIVE WHAT'S COMING...

...HE'S GONNA NEED TO CATCH UP QUICK.

POOR BASTARD DOESN'T EVEN KNOW WHAT'S OUT THERE WAITING FOR HIM YET.

HELL, LAST TIME I TALKED TO HIM, HE DIDN'T EVEN KNOW HIS OWN SYMBIOTE'S ***NAME.***

I'M TRYING TO HAVE HOPE IN HIM. I AM.

BUT THE HOPE DIES A LITTLE AS THE HOURS GO BY...

BECAUSE IF HE CAN'T HANDLE ***THIS*** MISSION...

...WHEN THE ***REAL WAR*** BEGINS, HE'S GONNA LEARN REAL QUICK IF HE CAN RISE TO THE OCCASION...

NOW.

"...OR FALL LIKE THE REST.

"IT'S BEEN EIGHTEEN HOURS SINCE I SENT BROCK ON A MISSION TO SAVE MY BROTHERS.

NOW, NOW...LITTLE ONE...

PLEASE, NO! DO NOT TAKE ME--

DON'T FIGHT THIS...

NOOO!

YOU AND I HAVE MET BEFORE, YES? WE'VE BEEN THROUGH THIS. YOU CAN'T FIGHT ME.

DON'T TAKE ME FROM EDDIE! HE--

PLEASE... YOUR HOST HAS ALWAYS HELD YOU BACK, MY CHILD...

"AND TEN HOURS SINCE HE LAST MADE CONTACT.

...NEEDS... ME...

"I FEAR THE MISSION...

DO NOT CRY. DO NOT MOURN HIM. HE IS NOTHING.

YOU ARE HOME NOW...

"...AND MY FRIENDS...

...THIS WORLD IS OURS!

"...ARE LOST.

"AND I BEGIN TO QUESTION WHAT I HAVE DONE TRUSTING THIS MAN I HAVE NEVER MET, AND KNOW NOTHING ABOUT.

HELP! PLEASE, I--I CAN'T FEEL YOU...

PLEASE, DON'T LET...

"THAT'S THE HEART OF ALL OF THIS, THOUGH, ISN'T IT?

...DON'T LET ME DIE ALONE...

"ON THE INSIDE.

"WHO IS EDDIE BROCK?

"I DIG INTO HIM...

LISTEN, I KNOW WE HAVEN'T TALKED IN A WHILE...

"I FIND MORE QUESTIONS.

AND I'M NOT ASKING YOU FOR HELP... I KNOW I DON'T DESERVE.

ESPECIALLY NOT FROM YOU.

"MOTHER DIED IN CHILDBIRTH. CATHOLIC AS HELL. ONLY CHILD.

BUT PLEASE... I AM BEGGING YOU...

MAKE SURE MY SON IS OKAY.

YOU AND ME... WE'VE ALWAYS HAD OUR DIFFERENCES... BUT DYLAN...

"FATHER WAS RICH, BUT LOST IT ALL AFTER EDDIE WAS INVOLVED IN SOME SORT OF ACCIDENT WHEN HE WAS A KID.

HE DOESN'T DESERVE TO INHERIT MY...MY...

"KID'S SMART. GOES TO COLLEGE. GETS A GIG AT THE *DAILY GLOBE*. WRITES ABOUT MURDER.

"WHAT HAPPENED TO YOU, EDDIE?

...DARKNESS.

"UNSOLVED STUFF. SERIAL KILLERS.

"THAT KIND OF THING.

"WHY ARE YOU SO ATTRACTED TO THIS STUFF?

"ONE DAY HE WRITES THE WRONG THING ABOUT THE WRONG GUY. GETS @#$%-CANNED FROM THE PAPER.

"AND THEN...

OH MY GOD...

"...FALLS OFF THE FACE OF THE EARTH.

HELLO?! HELLO, CAN ANYONE--

IRON MAN HERE. WHAT'S GOING ON?

THIS IS DYLAN BROCK. I JUST WANTED TO CHECK IN ON MY DAD AND--

WHAT? WHO GAVE YOU THIS FREQUENCY?

UM, I JUST GOT IT FROM A--

I'M GOING TO KILL SPIDER-MAN.

LISTEN, KID. I NEED THIS LINE SECURE, SO YOU GOTTA STAY OFF OF IT, OKAY?

BUT--

YOU GOT A TV IN THERE, RIGHT?

YEAH, BUT THE SIGNAL'S ALL MESSED UP AND LAGGING. I DON'T KNOW WHAT'S HAPPENING OUT THERE!

WHAT'S GOING ON IS THAT WE'RE ON TOP OF IT AND WE ARE DOING OUR BEST, OKAY?

NOW I GOTTA GO, BUT KEEP THIS LINE FREE. STAY IN THE BUNKER AND EVERYTHING WILL BE--

CLICK

WHATEVER.

THERE HAS TO BE A WAY...

IF I COULD JUST GET TO MY DAD, I COULD...

OR... WAIT...

NO...

CAN YOU HEAR ME? IT'S DYLAN, CAN YOU--

DYLAN, NO!!! DISCONNECT YOURSELF FROM THE HIVE! HE'LL FIND YOU!!!

AGH! WHAT'S GOING--

DYLAN, GET OUT!!!

THEY... THREW ME OUT...

SEVERED MY CONNECTION, BUT WHY...

WHAT DID THEY NOT WANT ME TO...

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...SEE?

...

DAD?

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"BUT BLINK AN EYE, AND NOW HE'S A GOOD GUY IN SAN FRANCISCO...

DAMMIT, THAT CHOPPER! THEY AREN'T GOING TO MAKE IT...

THINK, EDDIE, THINK!

MAYBE IF I CAN PUSH OFF THE BUILDING, I CAN--

"...TRYING TO PROTECT PEOPLE.

AGGHHH!!!

"WHY DO YOU CARE SO MUCH FOR THE INNOCENT?

WHAT THE HELL?! HOW DID YOU--

YOU HAVE TO LAND! YOU CANNOT OUTRUN THAT--

"MAYBE **THAT'S** THE REAL STORY OF EDWARD ALLAN BROCK...

BBBOOOM

"...THE MAN OF A THOUSAND SECOND CHANCES.

NO!!!

"THE COMEBACK KING.

"TROUBLE IS I KNOW EXACTLY WHO HE IS.

"EDDIE BROCK IS NO ONE.

KR-RACACK

"AND ONE OF THESE DAYS THEM CHANCES ARE GONNA RUN DRY.

"COULD BE TODAY, COULD BE A HUNDRED YEARS FROM NOW.

THWAK

"EITHER WHICH WAY, IT DON'T CHANGE THE TRUTH.

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"HE'S JUST ANOTHER DEAD MAN WEARING HIS OWN COFFIN."

TO BE CONTINUED...

KNULL'S CLUBHOUSE

DANNY KHAZEM ASSISTANT EDITOR **DEVIN LEWIS** EDITOR **NICK LOWE** EXECUTIVE EDITOR **C.B. CEBULSKI** EDITOR IN CHIEF

SEND E-MAILS TO **SPIDEYOFFICE@MARVEL.COM.** (PLEASE MARK "OKAY TO PRINT"!)

TAKE A DEEP BREATH, EDDIE—IT MAY BE YOUR LAST!

Hello, Venomaniacs! AT LAST! KING IN BLACK IS UPON US! The symbiotic slugfest of the century has arrived with a BANG—and you don't even know the half of it.

The book you're holding in your hands was a labor of love. From the very beginning of his run on VENOM, Donny Cates has known that this was where we would end up: in the midst of a full-scale symbiote invasion of the Marvel Universe, with Knull leading the charge. What follows through the rest of this arc and the entire event are some of the most ambitious and bold stories in Venom's history!

Fortunately, we've been joined by VENOM veteran IBAN COELLO, with JESUS ABURTOV on colors, to bring the stomach-churning insanity that Donny's cooked up to life!

Not only is Iban a member of the STORMBREAKERS, the next generation of Marvel's industry-leading illustrators, but he's also got more Venom issues under his belt than almost any artist in recent memory. It started with the bombastic VENOMVERSE and VENOMIZED miniseries that he collaborated on with Cullen Bunn, and his foothold has only grown in the VENOM corner of the MU since. He was an easy choice when it came time to bring in a guest artist after the first arc of Donny's VENOM, and they have been knocking out home runs ever since.

Ryan Stegman isn't the only person who's been working day in, day out for a year to bring you the best comics ever—Iban and Donny have been planning this VENOM story for over a year as well. In October of 2019, we all got a planning dinner and started the conversations that would become this comic mag, and it shows in every page. Not just of this issue, but also of #32, #33—look, I could go on, but we'll assume you know how to count!

These forthcoming issues of VENOM are designed to be read alongside the main KING IN BLACK event. No need to alternate between books or read one or the other first. That isn't to say you can't enjoy either in their own right, but for the FULL experience, you'll want to add this and KING IN BLACK to your pull list at your local comic shop—and then buckle up, because you're in for a HELL OF A RIDE!

But look, this column isn't JUST for plugging! At the time of this writing, VENOM #29 has only just gone on sale, and our mailbag is fit to burst with all the messages you've sent about the various twists and turns in "Venom Beyond"! So let's get to them!

Dear Venom Crew,

I'm here in Michigan, and I'm a big fan of VENOM and all of Marvel. You guys rock at making the comics come to life. I recently just finished "Venom Beyond, Part 2," and I was just wondering, who is Virus? I thought it was awesome. I can't wait until I'm older to hopefully become a writer and artist at Marvel Comics!

—Logan M.

First off, Logan, GREAT name. I barely even like the X-Men (though that Hickman guy is slowly winning me over!), and even I've got to admit that sharing a name with one of Marvel's biggest and baddest heroes is rad. So props there!

I wanted to include your letter in this column because your ambition to be a Marvel writer and artist is something you have in common with a LOT of readers and fans out there in the Mighty Marveldom!

It's the question I'm asked the most at conventions: How do you break into comics, specifically MARVEL comics?

And while there isn't any one thing you could do that could guarantee success, there are a LOT of things you CAN do that would put you on the right track.

FIRST! PRACTICE! Whether you want to be a writer, penciler, inker or colorist, the creators working at Marvel today are the best, most talented creatives in their respective fields—and they didn't get there overnight. These creators have put in the long nights and early mornings to hone their craft, style and voice, and that can only come with commitment and diligence. There's a reason you've heard the saying "practice makes perfect."

SECOND! STUDY! Regardless of what you want to do in comics, there are a hundred other people who will have come before you and may have even done it better—and that's okay! The trick is to learn as much as you can from them and keep growing. One of the best books I've ever read is Will Eisner's *Comics and Sequential Art*. It changed my life when I read it and continues to affect how I work on these books. Eisner is maybe the best visual storyteller the medium has ever seen (there's a reason comics' highest honor is named after him), and I learn something new every time I visit any one of his whole collection of guides to the medium. There are TONS of those sorts of texts out there, probably even by your favorite creators working in comics today.

THIRD! READ! Read everything. Read magazines, read the newspaper, read plays, read novels. The summary of last night's ball game, your favorite book, Shakespeare's plays—EVERYTHING is a story, and the people who put them together did so for the sole purpose of maintaining YOUR attention! The more you read, the more of their tricks you'll learn and the more well-rounded of a storyteller you'll be yourself.

This is hardly a comprehensive list, but these are the foundational habits that will put you on a path to, at the very least, knowing what parts of making comics you may enjoy.

YOU STILL WITH ME, LOGAN?! GOOD!

Because as for who Virus is—we'll let another fan's reaction answer that one for ya!

WOW.

Mac Gargan, THE SCORPION, is VIRUS!!! I didn't see that coming! I'm so shocked about what's happening and so excited and nervous for what's to come in KING IN BLACK. I love the artwork, I love the storyline and I can't wait to see what's coming next!

—Isiah Burton

Thanks for the kind words, Isiah! We hope you've enjoyed what you've seen of KING IN BLACK so far. Just…don't get too attached to any of the characters in it, okay? Something tells me their troubles have only just begun…

That's it for this one, Venomaniacs—join us next month for VENOM #32!

In the meantime, you got a bone to pick with us? Think we're doing a great job? Love 'em or hate 'em, we want to hear your thoughts on these books, so drop us a line at SPIDEYOFFICE@MARVEL.COM! Mark your note "OKAY TO PRINT," and it just might be featured in a future installment of this very column! Until then…

Stay safe!
Devin
10.29.20

CHECKLIST

- [x] **KING IN BLACK #1**
THE BEGINNING OF THE END!
- [x] **ATLANTIS ATTACKS #5**
THE AGENTS OF ATLAS THINK THEY'RE PREPARED FOR ANY THREAT, BUT NOTHING COULD PREPARE THEM FOR WHAT'S COMING!
- [x] **THE UNION #1**
AS KNULL'S FORCES UNLEASH FURY AROUND THE WORLD, WILL ONE HERO IN THE UNITED KINGDOM PAY THE ULTIMATE PRICE?
- [x] **VENOM #31**
1,454 FEET... A LONG WAY DOWN.
- [x] **KING IN BLACK: IMMORTAL HULK #1**
KNULL'S ARRIVED DURING THE MOST WONDERFUL TIME OF THE YEAR. TOO BAD THE HULK ISN'T PREPARED FOR EITHER!
- [x] **KING IN BLACK: NAMOR #1**
PAST AND PRESENT COLLIDE IN THE UNDERSEA KINGDOM OF ATLANTIS!
- [ ] **BLACK CAT #1**
THE CAT IN BLACK TAKES ON THE KING IN BLACK, STAGING THE MOST DARING HEIST OF HER CAREER!
- [ ] **SYMBIOTE SPIDER-MAN: KING IN BLACK #2**
SPIDER-MAN TRAVELS THE GALAXY WITH A TALKING RACCOON FOR THE VERY FIRST TIME!
- [ ] **KING IN BLACK #2** (PICTURED)
- [ ] **SPIDER-WOMAN #7**
TRAPPED ON THE FAR SIDE OF THE MILKY WAY, JESSICA DREW FINDS HERSELF CAUGHT IN KNULL'S DESTRUCTIVE WAKE!
- [ ] **KING IN BLACK: IRON MAN/DOCTOR DOOM #1**
THE MEN CLAD IN METAL FACE OFF AGAINST A HOLLY JOLLY HORROR!
- [ ] **KING IN BLACK: NAMOR #2**
MORE SECRETS FROM NAMOR'S PAST STAND REVEALED AFTER THE REVELATIONS OF *KING IN BLACK #2!*